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ENGINE CYLINDER DEACTIVATION TEST APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR USING

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] This invention relates to electrical test apparatus and, more particularly, to a functionality testing apparatus for an engine cylinder deactivation control and system.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] It is known in the art relating to internal combustion engines to provide for deactivation of up to half of the engine cylinders in order to improve fuel economy where possible by operating fewer cylinders in a more efficient load range. In some engine arrangements, cylinder deactivation is provided by so-called switching lifters, which are hydraulically actuated to switch from normal actuation of the intake and exhaust valves to a telescoping mode in which the engine valves are deactivated. Simultaneously, fuel injection to the deactivated cylinders is cut off, allowing the pistons to continue reciprocating with a minimum of friction loss while the remaining cylinders drive the engine in a more efficient power mode.

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[0003] To control hydraulic deactivation of the lifters, as well as shutting off of the injectors, a deactivation control system is provided. This system provides both hydraulic control passages and electrical control apparatus, including solenoid-actuated hydraulic valves, which are electrically operated to control operation of the hydraulic system for actuating the switching lifters. Such features may be packaged in any suitable manner, and may be contained in a lifter oil manifold assembly (LOMA) containing electrical connection terminals, wires and solenoids for operating the solenoid valves.

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[0004] Individual test procedures have been developed for testing a cylinder deactivation control, or LOMA, prior to installation in an engine and for testing operation of the system after installation in an engine to diagnose operational problems that may be encountered. However, a need
5 has existed for an easy to use multifunction test device that can be applied during engine build, in dynamometer testing, during vehicle development and for vehicle service diagnosis in the field. Such a device will preferably comprise a deactivation multi tester that can be used to perform comprehensive system testing, reveal possible root causes of failures, be
10 simple to use and require no elaborate instrumentation.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The present invention provides an apparatus for testing functionality of an engine cylinder deactivation control and system having a
15 plurality of solenoid operated valves for controlling hydraulic actuation of switching valve lifters. The apparatus includes a portable test box enclosing an electrical circuit connectable between the deactivation control LOMA wiring harness and the engine wiring harness. Also provided are a ground lead for connection to the control ground, a solenoid lead for each cylinder
20 and connectable to the solenoids of their respective cylinders, and external taps on the exterior of the box and connected one with each of the ground lead and the solenoid leads.

[0006] In an exemplary embodiment, a power light, injector cutoff leads and separate cylinder test switches are also included. Exemplary
25 methods are disclosed for using the box to test for grounds and circuit resistance of the system as well as for proper operation of the system in a running engine.

[0007] These and other features and advantages of the invention will be more fully understood from the following description of certain specific

embodiments of the invention taken together with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- 5 [0008] FIG. 1 is an external front view of a LOMA test box for use with six-cylinder engine equipment.
- [0009] FIG 2. is a view similar to FIG. 1 but showing the internal circuitry of the test box of FIG. 1.
- [0010] FIG. 3 is a graph of percent throttle position versus torque for
10 the same engine operated on six and three cylinders.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

- [0011] Referring first to FIG. 1 of the drawings, numeral 10 generally indicates test apparatus according to the invention. The apparatus
15 includes a portable test box 12 connected by cables at opposite ends with multiple pin connectors including a first connector 14 to a LOMA/injector harness and a second connector 16 to an engine harness, not shown.
- [0012] The front surface of the test box 12 mounts three cylinder switches 18, 20, 22, adapted for association with cylinders 1, 3, and 5,
20 respectively, of an associated engine. Three resistance taps 24, 26, and 28 are associated with the switches 18, 20, 22, respectively. A ground resistance tap 30 is similarly associated with a power lamp 32, visible on the front surface of the test box. A ground wire 34 extends from a side of the box and terminates in an alligator clip 36 for connection to a grounded
25 portion of an engine or other grounded object during certain test procedures,
- [0013] Referring now to FIG.2, wherein like numerals indicate like components, interior circuitry of the test box 12 is shown schematically, along with previously identified external features.
- [0014] Each of the switches 18, 20, 22 includes a normally open first
30 pole 38 and a normally closed second pole 40. The first poles 38 of the

switches are connected internally to the external ground wire 34. The power lamp 34 is also grounded on one side to the external ground wire 34. On their hot sides, the poles 38 of the switches are connected to their respective resistance taps 24, 26, 28 and, through connector 14, with a source of LOMA electrical power. The hot side of the power lamp 32 similarly connects with its resistance tap 30 and, through connector 14, with the source of LOMA power. The second poles 40 of switches 18, 20, 22 are normally closed to complete ground circuits from injectors, not shown, to the engine injector control unit.

10 **[0015]** When the test box 12 is connected to an engine electric power circuit, actuation of any of the switches 24, 26, 28 closes its respective pole 38. This completes an electrical circuit through a solenoid valve of an associated LOMA to deactivate the switching lifters of an associated cylinder and deactivate its valves. Simultaneously, the second pole of the actuated switch opens to cut off current flow in the ground side of the injector solenoid of the associated cylinder.

15 **[0016]** Accordingly, when the test box is connected to an operating engine through the pin connectors 14, 16, actuating any of the switches provides power to deactivate the lifters while simultaneously discontinuing or cutting off fuel supply to the injector of the associated cylinder, so that fuel is not provided to the cylinder when the valves are deactivated. Also, the power lamp 32 is lit and power is provided to the resistance taps 24, 26, 28 and 30.

20 **[0017]** Use of the deactivation test box requires first that the test box be connected to the LOMA injector harness on the one side and to the engine harness or an alternative source of power on the other side. LOMA solenoid circuit checks can then be made.

25 **[0018]** Circuit resistance checks for the LOMA valve solenoids, which control pressure oil feed to deactivate the lifters, are conducted by connecting an ordinary ohmmeter between the common resistance tap 30 and

each of the individual cylinder switch taps 24, 26 and 28 separately, and measuring the resistance through each of the solenoid circuits individually. A predetermined resistance value range is used to determine if the LOMA solenoid circuits are within acceptable limits.

5 **[0019]** A separate ground test is made with the ground connector clip 36 not attached to an engine ground. Instead, an ohmmeter common lead is connected to a good engine ground and the other lead is connected sequentially with each of the other cylinder resistance taps 24, 26, 28 to check for shorts to ground in each of the cylinder solenoid circuits. If any of
10 the circuit checks reveal a malfunction, the resistance values should be recorded and corrective action taken.

[0020] To check for electrical power to the LOMA, the multi tester connectors must be connected to the engine harness and the LOMA harness, and the ground clip must be attached to a good engine ground. The engine
15 ignition power should then be turned on which, in a vehicle, would be accomplished by turning on the ignition switch.

[0021] With the power on, the power indicator light 32 will light if LOMA power is present. If the power light fails to light, there is no electrical power to the LOMA and the cylinders will not deactivate properly.
20 A check should be made in this case for an open LOMA circuit fuse or a bad power wire connection. If the power light is lit but is very dim, a check should be made for a high resistance path in the LOMA power circuit.

[0022] Checks for proper operation of the LOMA in an operating engine are based on the fact that, at light engine loads, if both the intake and
25 exhaust engine valves to a single cylinder are deactivated, the engine speed will increase. This is illustrated in FIG. 3, which graphically charts torque vs. percent throttle opening for a six-cylinder engine with cylinder deactivation.

[0023] In FIG. 3, line 42 indicates operation of the engine on all six
30 cylinders, while line 44 indicates operation of the engine on only three

cylinders, with the other three cylinders deactivated. In each case the engine was run at 1200 RPM and the torque values were determined at various throttle positions. It is noted that below about 50 NM engine torque, there is more torque available in the deactivated mode (cylinders 1, 3 and 5
 5 deactivated) at any given throttle position than there is with all six cylinders operating. Thus, if the cylinders are deactivated and the throttle is held constant, the engine speed should increase.

[0024] In view of this fact, a procedure for the dynamic deactivation function test is to run the warmed-up engine at light load and deactivate each
 10 cylinder, one at a time, and monitor engine speed. If the deactivation system is operating properly, the deactivation of each cylinder will cause the engine speed to increase. The engine speed increase can normally be easily heard, but if necessary an engine tachometer can be monitored to note the speed changes.

[0025] If the engine speed decreases, one or all of the mechanical cylinder deactivation devices, or switching lifters, is not operating. If the speed at first decreases and then increases, one or more of the mechanical cylinder deactivation devices is slow to respond. The multi tester is arranged so that when power is provided to deactivate one of the cylinders, the tester
 20 shuts off the fuel injector to that cylinder so that a hydraulic lock does not occur upon reactivation of engine cylinder operation.

[0026] Abnormalities in expected engine speed changes can indicate poor hydraulic switching valve operation, low or restricted oil pressure supply to the LOMA, internal LOMA oil leaks, sticky or bound lifter
 25 switching pins, or loss of proper switching pin lash.

[0027] The specific design or embodiment of deactivation multi tester illustrated is a suggested embodiment of this tool. However, variations of this design, such as including universal connectors for multiple engine applications and integral ohm and speed meters, are possible variations of the
 30 design within the spirit and scope of the invention.

[0028] While the invention has been described by reference to certain preferred embodiments, it should be understood that numerous changes could be made within the spirit and scope of the inventive concepts described. Accordingly, it is intended that the invention not be limited to the disclosed
5 embodiments, but that it have the full scope permitted by the language of the following claims.